

**Framework Convention
for the Protection of the Marine
Environment of the Caspian Sea**

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**CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES
Third Meeting
Aktau, 10-12 August 2011**

Ministerial Statement and Decisions

of the third Meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Framework Convention for the Protection of the Marine Environment of the Caspian Sea

**10-12 August 2011
Aktau, Republic of Kazakhstan**

The Ministers of Natural Resources and Environment and High-Level Officials of the Governments of the Parties to the Framework Convention for the Protection of the Marine Environment of the Caspian Sea done at the city of Tehran on the fourth day of November 2003, (hereinafter referred to as the Tehran Convention), and entered into force on 12 August 2006:

Recalling their Statements adopted at the first Conference of the Parties of 25 May 2007, Baku, Republic of Azerbaijan, and at the second Conference of the Parties to the Tehran Convention of 12 November 2008, Tehran, Islamic Republic of Iran;

Noting the report by the interim Secretariat on the implementation of the Tehran Convention (document TC/COP3/2);

Noting the recommendations of the Steering Committee of the GEF/UNDP (CaspEco) Project: The Caspian Sea: Restoring Depleted Fisheries and Consolidation of a Permanent Regional Environmental Governance Framework (document TC/COP3/INF.3);

Noting that the Republic of Azerbaijan and the Islamic Republic of Iran have put forward their candidature for hosting the Secretariat of the Tehran Convention and that the Russian Federation has expressed interest;

Noting furthermore amongst other options the proposal made by the Vice-President of the Islamic Republic of Iran for collaborative management of the Secretariat including a Centre of Excellence for each Protocol distributed amongst the Contracting Parties;

1. Decide the establishment/shift of the Secretariat of the Convention to the territory of one of the Caspian littoral states, and to take a final decision on the procedural aspects of the Convention, especially regarding the Secretariat location, if possible, not later than by the fourth Meeting of the Conference of the Parties.
2. Express their gratitude and invite the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) to organize a meeting on the location of the permanent Secretariat and continue to host and administer the interim Secretariat of the Tehran Convention through its Regional Office for Europe in Geneva, until a permanent Secretariat arrangement has been decided upon and put in place;
3. Welcome the adoption and signing of the Protocol Concerning Regional Preparedness, Response and Co-operation in Combating Oil Pollution Incidents to the Framework Convention for the Protection of the Marine Environment of the Caspian Sea (Annex to document TC/COP3/3) by the Contracting Parties and confirm the intention of their respective Governments to ensure early ratification of the Protocol, and request the (interim) Secretariat to undertake the necessary steps to promote its implementation;
4. Noting the agreement in principle reached on the text of the Protocol on Environmental Impact Assessment in a Transboundary Context to the Framework Convention for the Protection of the Marine Environment of the Caspian Sea (Annex to document TC/COP3/4) by the Contracting Parties, decide to finalize the arrangements for adoption and signature of the Protocol as soon as possible before the fourth Meeting of the Conference of the Parties;
5. Welcome the progress and underline the importance of completing the process of endorsement of the Protocol on the Conservation of Biological Diversity to the Framework Convention for the Protection of the Marine Environment of the Caspian Sea and the Protocol on the Protection of the Caspian Sea against Pollution from Land-Based Sources and Activities to the Framework Convention for the Protection of the Marine Environment of the Caspian Sea;
6. Request the (interim) Secretariat to assist and coordinate the activity aimed at the development of proposals on monitoring of the state of the environment of the Caspian Sea;
7. Welcome further cooperation of the Parties in support of the development of the Agreement on the Conservation and Management of the Aquatic Bioresources of the Caspian Sea;
8. Stress the importance of developing National Convention Action Plans, with special emphasis on ways and means to ensure inter Ministerial coordination and mainstreaming concerns for the marine environment of the Caspian Sea in overall Government policy, as well as on short, medium and long term budget requirements, and confirm the intention of their respective Governments to adopt, endorse and initiate implementation of the National Convention Action Plans before the fourth Meeting of the Conference of the Parties;
9. Adopt the unified reporting format contained in document TC/COP3/8 as the guiding framework for reporting by the Caspian States on the implementation of the Tehran Convention and, upon their entry into force, its Protocols, and request the (interim) Secretariat to co-ordinate and prepare the first report on the implementation of the Tehran Convention and its Protocols for consideration of the Conference of the Parties at its fourth Meeting;

10. Welcome the presentation of the first State of the Environment report as a comprehensive document to implement the activities of the Caspian Environment Program and the Tehran Convention; decide that the next State of the Environment report should be issued in four years time, and request the (interim) Secretariat to develop for submission and decision by the Conference of the Parties at its fourth Meeting, a format for future state of the environment reports with major indicators and networks of institutions capable of measuring the quality of the waters of the Caspian Sea;
11. Note the importance of public participation and confirm their intention to facilitate stakeholder engagement in the protection of the marine environment of the Caspian Sea through National Strategies for Civil Society Engagement in the Protection of the Marine Environment of the Caspian Sea being part of National Convention Action Plans;
12. Welcome the progress in the establishment of a virtual Caspian Information Centre to be operational prior to the fourth Meeting of the Conference of the Parties of the Tehran Convention;
13. Adopt the Programme of Work and Budget of the Tehran Convention for 2011-2012 as contained in document TC/COP3/11/Rev.3;
14. Confirm their decision to continue to collectively provide an amount of \$ 360,000 per year (\$ 72,000 as contribution of each Party) to the budget of the Tehran Convention;
15. Note with gratitude the support of the GEF-UNDP to the Caspian region through the Caspian Environment Program and the CaspEco project towards the consolidation of a permanent regional environmental governance framework and seek further support by the GEF and other international partners for the protection of the marine environment of the Caspian Sea, especially in areas of the implementation of the Tehran Convention, ecosystem-based management and climate change adaptation;
16. Welcome the contributions provided by other international organizations, in particular UNDP, UNEP, the European Union and IMO, and call upon bilateral and multilateral donors to consider, continue or increase their support to the implementation of the Tehran Convention and its Protocol;
17. Welcome the participation in this Meeting of representatives of the oil, gas and shipping industry and call upon them to support the implementation of the Tehran Convention and its Protocol;
18. Express gratitude to the Government of the Republic of Kazakhstan for the organization of the third Meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Tehran Convention;
19. Accept with gratitude the offer of the Government of the Russian Federation to host the fourth Meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Tehran Convention in 2012.